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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001928

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: UNAMI DIBS NEGOTIATIONS HIT SNAG, BUT ARE  
CONTINUING

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1762  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 1683

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Peter Vrooman for reason 1.4  
(b).

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: (C) UNAMI's High Level Task Force (HLTF) negotiations over Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) between representatives of the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have slowed in the last two sessions, as the GOI side reacted negatively to the KRG constitution and expressed reluctance to reaffirm its earlier position that Makhmour district should be part of the KRG. Regular weekly meetings will continue however. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) UNAMI contacts report that HLTF negotiations have not produced much progress since the June 29 meeting. That meeting concluded with an initial agreement to include Makhmour district (now in Ninewa) as part of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and to include it in Erbil province (ref A). Since that time, Safa Al Safi, one of the two GOI representatives, has balked at admitting that he agreed to affiliate Makhmour with Erbil. (NOTE: All "agreements" are, in any event, provisional. Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. END NOTE).

[1](#)3. (C) The June 7 meeting ended without any further progress on Makhmour or other districts. UNAMI's Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General (A/SRSG), Andrew Gilmour, said he felt lucky that "he kept the two sides from walking out" during the meeting when discussions veered toward the proposed KRG Constitution.

[1](#)4. (C) A/SRSG reported that he canceled the planned July 14 meeting before it occurred. He had had a discussion with Safa Al Safi (GOI side) earlier in the day wherein Al Safi said he wanted to put on record that he did not make any agreement on Makhmour district in the June 29 meeting. Later Gilmour spoke with Mohammed Ihsan (KRG side) who said he wanted to finalize the Makhmour agreement and find out when the GOI would take steps to formalize the administrative transfer of Makhmour to Erbil. Gilmour felt it better to postpone the meeting rather than risk a confrontation on the issue. He positioned the cancellation as necessary for both sides to meet with visiting U.S. legal consultants.

COMMENT  
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[1](#)5. (C) Although the two sides engaged in the HLTF are now bickering, the HLTF remains a useful forum to channel Arab and Kurd discussions on DIBs issues. Post is encouraging UNAMI to continue to facilitate these meetings in the hope that they will build confidence between the two sides, and lead to increased momentum to resolve GOI and KRG territorial disputes once the July 25 KRG elections are held. END COMMENT.  
HILL